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# Richmond is LAFD's chief in the Valley

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# Richmond is LAFD's chief in the Valley

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As he prepares to move into a new position in July, Los Angeles Fire Department Assistant Chief Trevor Richmond is implementing some NPS Center for Homeland Defense and Security concepts.

Richmond, a 27 year veteran of the department and CHDS master's degree alumnus, is set to be promoted to Deputy Chief this summer, overseeing the San Fernando Valley Bureau. He has been assigned to the Valley since July 2015 and has been the Assistant Bureau Commander for the Valley Bureau for the last seven months.

With 200 square miles and about 2 million people, San Fernando Valley may well be considered a city within a city. With the area come a full array of potential threats – earthquakes, wildland fires, flooding along with critical infrastructure such as the city's water filtration plant and soft targets such as Universal Studios and the Los Angeles Zoo.

"The Valley geography is a little different from the rest of the City in that the wildland urban interface is pervasive throughout the perimeter of the Valley," Richmond noted. "Homes built into the local hills offer unique firefighting challenges not found in the rest of the City. Fire Stations are spread farther apart resulting in longer response times from resources."

The position will allow him to continue with a program birthed during his time as a master's degree student. The Leadership Empowerment Advisory Panel, or LEAP, was established three months ago to improve policies and practices by formally seeking out input from the rank-and-file. The meetings, which are voluntary, enable an exchange of perspectives and, by design, there is no formal structure to the gatherings in hopes that doing so will help remove organizational barriers to providing input.

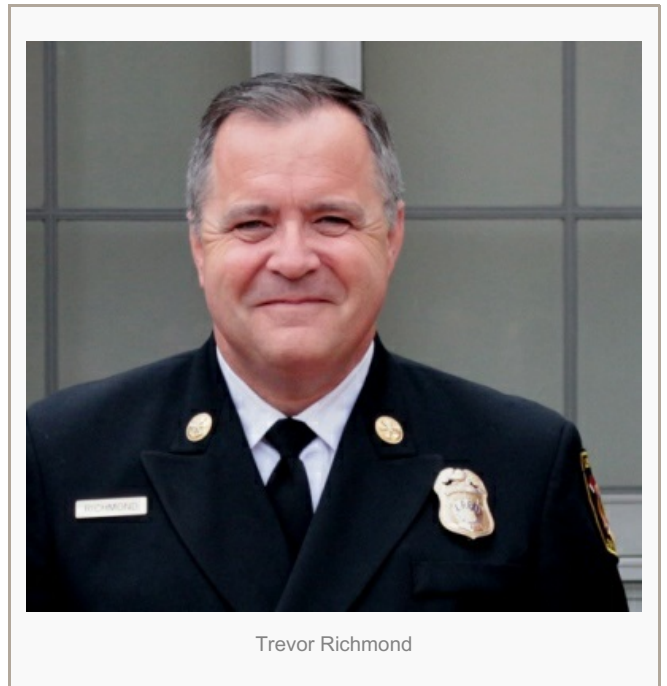
During the last session the group began with a critical thinking exercise before addressing the question of the day: What is the division between chief officers and the personnel in the field? Leaders learned that staffers believe Battalion Chiefs are not forming vital relationships, something that helps nurture buy-in to policies in procedures. In turn, chief officers were able to communicate some of the political and city policy factors that can affect their decisions. At the same time, the exchange helps management identify potential future leaders, he added.

"This really came to me from the technology class at CHDS," Richmond said. "In class we looked at a lot of cautionary tales. They all had common theme of failed end-user input. They failed to bring the technology to the people who would actually use it. I took that concept and brought it to fire department."

Additionally, Richmond would like to enter a public safety dialog with the local communities in the Valley. Doing so would provide unique perspectives and potentially entice them into understanding that homeland security is everyone's responsibility, Richmond said.

His vision comes with strong street experience, including working the Los Angeles riots of 1992 and the Northridge Earthquake in 1994 as well as serving stint as 911 Director.

"One thing I learned from the command perspective is the need for collaborative and unified command," Richmond



noted. “Trying to solve these unique public safety challenges requires the efforts of all government agencies involved in public safety. Coordinated effort with the Los Angeles Police Department as well as state and federal entities is required if these large scale events are going to be brought to resolution.”

During his LAFD career Richmond has held the ranks of Aerial Operator, Captain I, Captain II, Battalion Chief and Assistant Fire Chief.

His time as a master’s degree student offered the opportunity to research leadership concepts, as he did in his thesis, “[Developing a New Context for Leadership Development in the Los Angeles Fire Department](#).”

“My experience at CHDS gave me the ability to look at problems from multiple angles,” he noted. “To validate my instincts and think through the issues with a critical eye has been a tremendous asset to everything that I do.”

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